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PRESIDENT HAMILTON APPEARS ON THE NEW \$10.00 FOOD STAMP

MORE THAN A MEAL

two programs provide companionship and hot meals for the elderly

It's off to school for Seattle's elderly

By Benedicto Montoya

WHEN YOU CONSIDER that Seattle, Washington, has 230 overcast days a year, it's hard to believe the people there are optimists. Yet optimism is as prevalent in the city as the much maligned rain, especially among the staff of an ambitious new city sponsored program called SPICE.

SPICE, an acronym for School Programs Involving Our City's Elderly, is designed to provide food, health and recreation services to the elderly through the city schools. And one important aim is to involve participants in school activities as well as the SPICE program itself.

Seattle began SPICE at a dozen neighborhood elementary schools in October. The city selected schools that were located near concentrations of elderly residents and could be reached by public transportation.

SPICE's food service component began the three-pronged effort. The program uses the city's school food service capability to provide nutritious hot meals for persons 60 and over. The meals are basically the same served schoolchildren under the National School Lunch Program.

Although not designed as a pro-

gram for people with low incomes, meal prices are low enough to attract these individuals—the full cost of the meal is 70 cents. (The children's meal is 45 cents.)

Since all 12 schools are authorized to accept food stamps, elderly food stamp recipients can pay for the meals with their coupons.

According to SPICE director Bob Barr, participation by elderly food stamp recipients has been disappointingly low, although overall participation has been more encouraging. At the end of the first month, the program was serving an average of 675 people.

"When we began planning SPICE we talked in terms of serving 50 people per day at each of the 12 sites by the end of the first year. These were optimistic figures," Barr said. "Realistically we are talking about an average of 15 people per day per site . . . if, after 2 years, participation has not gradually increased, then we are in trouble."

Seattle's Mayor Wes Uhlman, a prime mover behind the city-sponsored program, shares Bob Barr's optimism.

"A meal program just can't carry it," he said. "Once the health, recreation and elderly involvement in the school and program begin, participation should increase."

To help publicize the project, the mayor recorded radio and television spots promoting SPICE.

"It's no problem to reach the organized groups of elderly," he points out. "What's tough is getting to those who are alone, who don't participate in anything."

For those people more difficult to reach, door belling has begun. Barr is currently trying to get a Washington State National Guard unit to spend a weekend canvassing neighborhoods to spread the word about SPICE.

The idea behind the food component of the project is not new—a

number of cities have food programs for the elderly.

"What is innovative about SPICE," explained Lee Pasquarella, special assistant to Mayor Uhlman, "is the combination of food, health, recreation, and interaction between kids and elderly that will be offered in neighborhood schools." Pasquarella added that SPICE is also unique in being entirely funded by city revenue.

Seattle is a city of about 500,000 people, 98,000 of whom are 60 or older. Mr. Barr said that while more money is now available for services to the elderly than ever before, no one agency has enough to adequately meet the needs of the elderly.

"There's a bit of money here for recreation, a bit there for health services, and some over there for food service," the director said. "Our idea was to bring all this together under one program. Then, rather than using large portions of the money for facilities and hardware, use existing facilities—the schools—thereby freeing the money for what it was intended, serving people."

The park department now puts money budgeted for senior adult recreation into SPICE, providing specialists who organize programs for the elderly in the schools. The health department also plans to provide services to the elderly through SPICE.

When approached by the city, the school district reacted enthusiastically to the idea of using school facilities for SPICE.

"Everyone thought it was a great idea," said Ken Baer, manager of food service for the Seattle public schools. "We have given full cooperation and really want it to work."

"We have a lot to learn about serving the elderly," he added. "We've had some complaints—institutional food service always does—and while we can't create new menus for the elderly, we are willing to make adjustments to the school lunch menu."

For instance, when the schools serve carrot sticks to the children, they offer the elderly salads. If tacos, corn dogs, pizza or similar foods are on the menu, schools substitute convenience foods for the elderly.

The food service managers are presently making an effort to identify foods generally unpopular with the elderly participants. This will give the cafeterias enough flexibility to make substitutions to satisfy nearly everyone involved.

"All we ask," said the food service manager, "is that they try our menus. There are many things that the elderly just think they won't like but are really quite acceptable."

Many SPICE participants expect pizza to be spicy and crunchy, but

the pizza the schools serve is mildly seasoned and has a soft crust.

Meals planned for students can be easily adapted for the elderly, according to Betty Marcelynas, nutritionist for the Seattle school district, who has helped school cafeteria managers adjust their menus. The dietary requirements are similar for both groups—fewer calories and more protein than normal adult requirements.

Although SPICE has not begun a formal program involving students and the elderly, the kids have been very receptive to the older folks. At some schools, the elementary school-children act as hosts and hostesses to their elderly visitors, showing them to their seats and carrying their trays. At others, the children have made

welcome signs and placemats and invited the elderly into their classrooms.

In an effort to promote interaction, SPICE staffers are planning projects like STEP—Services to Elderly People—in which junior high school students can volunteer 100 hours of services to the elderly and receive one semester of credit.

SPICE encourages the elderly to become involved in school activities by serving as teacher aides and luncheon assistants. There is also a great emphasis on involvement in the SPICE program itself.

Mr. Barr and his small staff are working to involve established senior citizens organizations. The American Association of Retired Persons has encouraged their chapters to hold their



Following lunch in the cafeteria at Adams School, SPICE participants enjoy activities sponsored by the city's Park and Recreation Department, including clay modeling.

monthly meetings and eat at the schools. SPICE has asked church groups that meet regularly to come to the schools and have lunch. The response has been very good.

Eventually, the SPICE staff plans to turn the whole program over to the elderly and just monitor financing and help with technical problems.

"The program is for seniors and is going to be run by seniors," Mr. Barr explained. "We are going to form advisory committees, composed of, say, the school principal, a member of the board of a senior center, and

just people who live in the neighborhood and participate in SPICE."

Food service manager Ken Baer believes that each of the 12 schools could feed 100 elderly citizens a day and he hopes the present volume will increase. "The greater the volume," he said, "the greater will be the menu choice."

"The schools really want this to work," he added. "Our cafeteria managers are excited about the program and are going out of their way to see that the elderly are satisfied." ☆



City dignitaries attended the SPICE opening, which featured the Senior Swingers Band.

Communal dining in Pennsylvania

By Herb Strum

GOOD FOOD. Good friends. Good talk.

The raucous demands of the three Musketeers?

No. Rather, they are the simple unassuming requests of a part of American society — senior citizens who are alone.

Governments and social service organizations are beginning to respond to the need of filling the void at the end of these long and full lives.

One heralded project in helping the elderly has been the establishment of communal dining centers where senior citizens can enjoy both nutritious meals and the companionship of peers.

"It is more than just a hot meal we're offering," said Sandy Shuman, site manager of a senior citizens center at St. John's Lutheran Church in Easton, Pennsylvania. "It is an interlude, a place to come and put your mind off your loneliness and age."

The impetus for centers like St. John's came in 1972 from the Older Americans Act, and centers opened throughout the country.

The program received a boost last year when USDA food stamp regulations were amended to permit senior citizens to pay for their meals

at dining centers with stamps.

Elderly projects in northeastern Pennsylvania were quick to respond to the food stamp changes. Edward McNichols, officer-in-charge of the FNS field office in Wilkes Barre, said in his area some 50 centers, serving more than 2,500 elderly persons, have already been authorized to accept food stamps.

At St. John's Church, about 70 senior citizens begin to gather in the recreation hall about 11:30 a.m. each day for lunch.

Wrapped around the meal are a

couple hours of companionship and conversation. This togetherness, said Ms. Shuman, is as important to their spirits as the meal is to their bodies.

"You have to have a reason to get up in the morning," said Sarah Casparro, executive director of the Lackawanna County Meals on Wheels Program. "And perhaps our hot lunch is that reason."

Talk and discussion range from their grandchildren (who sometimes can only be recalled by producing a picture or two taken when they were "very, very young"), to the cost of

meat, taxes, inflation and even marriage. Between the church sites and another center at the Moosic Housing Project in Moosic, Pennsylvania, there have been five proposals and acceptances of marriage.

Most feeding sites have their food prepared and delivered each day from central kitchens operated by food management service companies or community non-profit organizations. Meals arrive hot in special thermal containers.

In both Easton and Moosic, participants can either walk or be driven to the dining sites. And for the home-bound elderly, there is door-to-door service with a van delivering meals.

Mr. McNichols said one of the biggest problems his office faces is getting senior citizens to take advantage of food stamps.

"They have a lot of pride," he said. "Some are even reluctant to make a contribution for their meals with stamps even if they have them. These participants would rather pay in cash than reveal that they are on food stamps."

The OIC and his staff, together with Victor Giacometti, of the State welfare department's regional office in Scranton, have embarked on a project aimed at acquainting senior citizens with the food stamp program. They have held a series of meetings at communal dining centers to explain how food stamps work and answer questions.

"We believe that through these personal visits, we can show that the program cares, is interested and wants to help," Mr. McNichols said.

While many senior citizens are often reluctant to speak at the meetings about food stamps, the OIC and his staff are often approached after the sessions by the elderly who want "a little more information" about the program.

One senior citizen who does use food stamps to pay for her meals is a septuagenarian who comes every day for a hot meal which she considers a "bargain" in more ways than one.

"The food is good," she said. "And, I don't have to wash the dishes either." ☆



William Nagle has been coming to St. John's every day since the center opened.

DEPARTMENT STORE OWNER TURNS ISSUING AGENT

By Joe Dunphy

THE ROLLING HILLS of New Hampshire, whether basked in sunlight with fields of green or blanketed with winter snow, provide visitors with images of old-fashioned New England peace and serenity.

The small towns dotting the New Hampshire countryside add to the rural charm of the State. But, in a sense, low-income families living in these tiny municipalities are hampered by that aura of tranquility that the area portrays.

"People suffer silently in these rural areas," said Nathaniel Kessin, owner of Achber's Department Store in Tilton. "Poverty is like a sick dog, it goes off in the woods and hides. Even the snow and the greenery hide it."

As director of the local child and family services, Mr. Kessin knows the people of the Tilton area. He knows of their stern Yankee pride. And he knows of families without homes living in cars, and houses where peanut butter is the only thing on kitchen shelves for days at a time.

A means of assistance to low income families came earlier this year when the State undertook administration of the food stamp program. But, in Tilton, the program ran into a stumbling block at the outset.

The two banks in the town decided not to serve as issuance facilities where recipients could purchase

stamps. This meant that area residents would have to travel up to 50 miles to food stamp outlets in Franklin or Laconia.

That's when Mr. Kessin took more than a passing interest in the food stamp program. He offered his clothing store as an issuing office for the Tilton-Northfield-Sanbornton area. His offer was readily accepted by the State department of welfare.

"I'm filling a vacuum," the merchant said, "because I'm concerned about the elderly, handicapped and working poor who can't readily travel to other towns."



Throughout the State, rural areas like Tilton presented problems for the State welfare department in setting up accessible issuance facilities.

But, according to Irvin A. Grubbs, the State's food stamp program administrator, New Hampshire has been able to meet its goal of placing outlets where recipients must travel no

more than 20 miles to buy their stamps.

"We have about 85 outlets now, and have to get more," the food stamp official said, noting that ingenuity and cooperation with municipalities were key elements in reaching the goal.

Mr. Grubb said a number of towns, a school and some social service agencies have provided space and manpower to handle food stamp sales.

The issuing agent's responsibilities are many and require a stiff security check, bonding and, of course, paperwork.

Mr. Kessin accepted the task knowing all of the problem areas.

"I did a lot of reading and a lot of checking," he explained. "I didn't walk into this with my eyes closed because I don't do anything unless I know about it."

The Tilton businessman said that his first few months of dealing with food stamps have given him a better insight into the program.

"At first, I thought the town needed the service I could provide," he said. "Now, I'm really sold on the program."

Mr. Kessin's knowledge of the food stamp program has been a real help to area recipients. And he's convinced that serving them at the store has been an advantage.

"We have the friendly local store-keeper atmosphere and people ask questions about the program more freely than they would at a bank," he explained. "I think we've been able to direct them a little bit better."

During the second month of the store's operation, about 275 families bought stamps at the Tilton outlet. This figure could double in the next few months, Mr. Kessin pointed out.

Increasing recipient participation has also been a major concern of the State. The department of welfare

has revised its projected number of food stamp recipients from 80,000 to more than 100,000.

Mr. Grubbs explained that the State has set up a number of outreach efforts to enlist more participants. With the assistance of local community action projects, six mobile certification vans are visiting towns throughout New Hampshire, taking applications from potential recipients unable to get to welfare offices.

A pamphlet explaining the food stamp program has been distributed

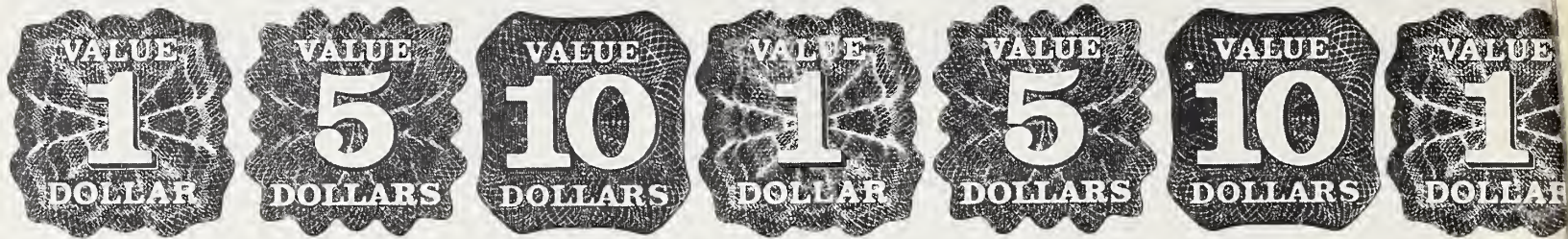
through State welfare offices and various social service agencies that have contact with the public. Another written aid is a monthly pamphlet dealing with nutrition information for food stamp families.

"The working poor are beginning to participate," Mr. Kessin said. "But the pride of these people is still a big thing.

"It's a matter of letting them know that food stamps are not a welfare handout, but a program that their taxes have paid for." ☆



NEW FOOD COUPONS ARE COMING



On March 1, the Department of Agriculture will introduce a new series of food stamps including a redesigned \$5 coupon, and new \$1 and \$10 coupons. These changes reflect the food stamp program's response to participants' needs, and changes in the economy.

Up to now, the food stamp program has been able to effectively use 50-cent, \$2 and \$5 coupons. But last year alone, allotments increased by an average 29 percent, and the number of coupons needed to meet the allotments went up proportionately.

"Originally, we increased the use of the \$5 coupon and cut back on the use of the \$2 coupon in an attempt to conserve paper," said P. Royal Shipp, Director of the Food Stamp Division. "But we found that was not enough.

"In developing and planning the new series, we took into consideration recipient needs, production and shipping costs, necessary security measures, and the paper and energy shortages," commented Mr. Shipp. "We gave this information to our Automated Data Processing Division and they developed a computer program with the best possible combination of food coupon book denominations. The new coupon book denominations are: \$2, \$7, \$40, \$50 and \$65."

The coupon book covers have also been redesigned and, like the old coupon books, each denomination will be printed in a different ink color on ivory cover stock: \$2 printed in green ink; \$7 in purple ink; \$40 in brownish-gold ink; \$50 in blue ink and \$65 in reddish-brown ink.

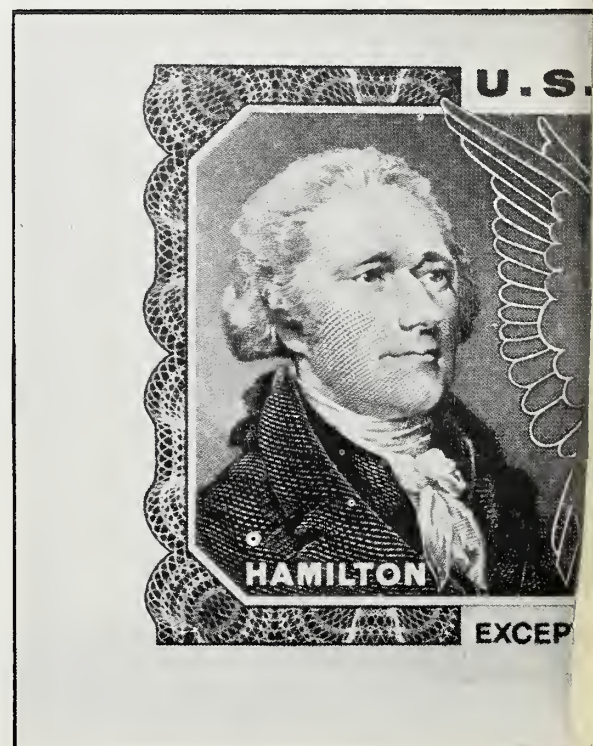
The Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing created the new coupon series using a number of elements designed to discourage counterfeiting, according to Bob Wilcox, head of production and scheduling at the Bureau.

The new, detailed presidential portraits and seals which appear on special coupon paper are particularly difficult to duplicate.

"The new symbols are composed of much finer lines than previously," said Mr. Wilcox. "Food stamps are printed from engraved plates which can reproduce this fine detail. Counterfeiters use a photographic process to reproduce the coupons which loses a lot of detail, so the more intricate the food stamp design, the harder it is to counterfeit."

A number of proven security measures will continue to be observed. The Bureau will still produce the inks for printing the coupons, and the new specially marked paper will remain under its strict control.

As a security measure, old series food stamps, including household size books, that have not been distributed by February 28 will be collected and destroyed. This will also insure a complete transition from old coupons to the new ones. Old coupons still in circulation after March 1, will retain their value and can be



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By Katherine G. Thomas



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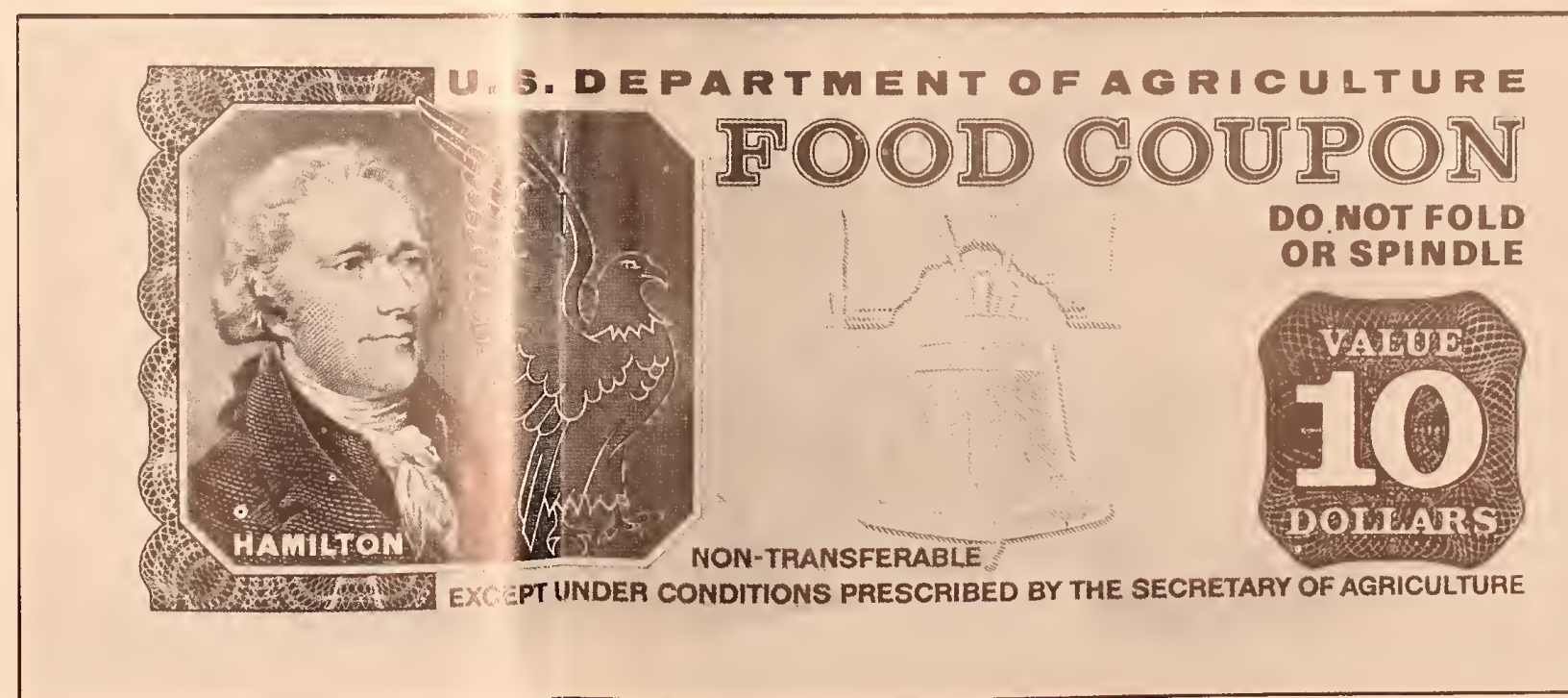
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accepted by retailers until July 1, 1975. Banks will redeem old food coupons from retailers and wholesalers through July 31, 1975.

Switching from old coupons to new ones will be no problem for food stamp recipients—they will use the \$1 coupon the same way they used the 50-cent coupon.

Food stamp customers can receive change under \$1 in the form of credit slips, or they may buy eligible food items for the amount of change due, rather than receive a credit slip. The recipient may also elect to pay the amount over the lowest even dollar amount "out-of-pocket." For example, on a purchase of \$5.25, the customer may choose to give the retailer a \$5 food coupon and pay the 25 cents with a quarter.

The \$1 coupon is the only one retailers can accept without a coupon book cover. The \$5 and \$10 coupons must be used with books that have serial numbers matching those on the face of the coupon.

"From an administrative point of view, the switch to new coupons is an enormous project," said Mr. Shipp. "We think the results will be worth the effort. The success of the change-over will depend on cooperation from everyone who works with the program at all levels."

"A great deal of work has already been done to insure a smooth transition, but there is still a lot left to do," he added. "At the moment, one of our major projects is a public information campaign that includes posters, flyers, television and radio spots, to get the word out to everybody involved in the program." ☆

Project ANSER Studies School Lunch

By Michael McAteer

BETWEEN JULY 1971 and December 1973, five counties in northeast Florida conducted an in-depth study of problems common to their school food service systems. The study, "Project ANSER" (Advancement of Nutrition Service and Education Research), was funded jointly by the State of Florida and the Food and Nutrition Service.

Under the project, the counties studied all aspects of school food service in order to develop new ways to make improvements. They investigated the process of selecting proper kitchen equipment, experimented with cooperative food purchasing among counties, used different approaches to nutrition education in both lunchroom and classroom, and reviewed personnel policies. They also devised new methods to increase school lunch participation among those eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Even though the project's methods were sometimes as sophisticated as using computers to keep track of students' eating habits, the purpose was simple and direct.

As Gladys Earnest, school food service director of a participating county, put it: "We conducted it to help us find better ways to do our jobs."

The five counties that took part in the project—Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, Seminole, and Volusia—reflect the overall makeup of the State. In the group were counties with both large and small populations from urban as well as rural areas. One county had a completely centralized school food service, and another was completely decentralized.

At the time of the study, the daily

average school attendance in the five counties was about 60,000. Approximately 42,830 of the students ate Type A lunches daily.

A staff of three professionals and one clerical worker carried out the work of the project. They worked closely with a Board of Directors consisting of representatives of the five counties, the State of Florida, and the Southeast Regional Office of the Food and Nutrition Service.

Of the several activities covered by Project ANSER, nutrition education and cooperative food purchasing are currently of major interest to most school food service directors.

Increasing participation

The work on increasing participation was done in St. Augustine, St. Johns County, during the 1972-73 school year. The goal was to make students in the project high school aware of the importance of nutrition and good eating habits, and to find ways to boost participation in the school lunch program.

To do this, the school tried several innovations. The first was a 3-day "nutrition awareness seminar" for 20 high school teachers. The teachers learned the basics of nutrition and how to teach them to students. They also discussed the National School Lunch Act, Type A lunches, the composition of foods, and areas of special interest to high school students, such as: "What Athletes in Training Should Know About Nutrition," and "Organic Health Foods: Fact or Fiction?" Teachers who attended the seminar received pay and in-service credit.

In an effort to involve students in the project, the school furnished paint to over 100 art students, and gave them free reign to redecorate the cafeteria. The change was dramatic. Since St. Augustine is a coastal city, the students chose "marineland" as a theme. First, they painted the walls a pale green. They then added life-size porpoises, sea turtles, octopuses, sea horses, sharks, seaweed, and a deep sea diver with air bubbles rising to the surface. They even included "Charlie the Tuna."

The school's vocational students also helped by designing and build-

ing room-divider planters, which the horticulture students filled with lush tropical plants.

The school administration did its part by adding an extra lunch period and installing a popular stereo sound system in the lunchroom. And cafeteria workers took a special 2-week on-the-job training course on how to prepare and serve lunches with the extra eye appeal that increases student participation.

As a result of all these activities, participation in the school lunch program increased by 24 percent.

George Hockenberry, Administrator of Florida's Food and Nutrition Services, believes the remarkable increase is because Project ANSER encouraged students to take part in project activities.

"The key to increasing lunch participation," Mr. Hockenberry explains, "is to get the kids involved." He is now using the St. Augustine model to increase participation throughout the State.

"I believe teachers, students, and the whole community are more receptive to nutrition education activities now because they feel a real need for them," says Edith Smoak, food service director of St. Johns County.

Cooperative purchasing

One of the most important problems facing local school food service directors today is rising food prices. The money-saving potential of quantity buying for more than one school system offers one possible answer. Project ANSER studied cooperative purchasing thoroughly and developed a "general purchasing model" for use by schools interested in this system.

Gladys Earnest, school food service director of Volusia County, supervised the cooperative purchasing activities. When the project began, she bought in quantity for only Volusia County, but later she began to buy half and whole railroad carloads of meat, chicken, cheese, and other regularly used foods for her own and surrounding counties.

Ms. Earnest is enthusiastic about cooperative purchasing. "We learned the abc's of it through Project ANSER," she says.

"First," she explains, "all five counties met to decide which foods would be bought in bulk. We named Volusia as the 'administering county,' but each year this function will be rotated to a different county.

"Next, we agreed on food specifications and established a mechanism for counties to place orders to the administering county. Finally, the administering county sent out bids, awarded contracts, and arranged for deliveries.

"Under cooperative purchasing," Ms. Earnest says, "we can buy quality food cheaper and can easily require suppliers to meet food specifications as stipulated on bids. Also, keeping inventories is simpler, and we now have one central source of budgetary records, which makes bookkeeping and accounting easier."

Food preparation facilities

Project ANSER included a feasibility study to determine whether Seminole County could save money by setting up a central kitchen to prepare food for all the county's schools. (Central kitchens prepare food for receiving schools but do not have facilities to serve onsite.)

Of the 32 schools in Seminole County, 14 had "self-contained" kitchens, where meals were prepared and served on-site. The remainder were operating under the "base-satellite" system, where one base kitchen prepared meals for on-site service and for five to eight receiving schools.

The research indicated that a central kitchen serving all of Seminole County would not save enough money to justify the changeover. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that setting up a central kitchen to serve the schools in all five counties would not be economically feasible.

Study of food habits

Another project undertaken by the staff was a "24-hour food habit survey" of elementary and junior high students from average and above average income homes. This revealed "widespread nutritional inadequa-

cies" in the food intake of these schoolchildren.

According to Nena Council, who was assigned to the project from the FNS Southeast Regional Office, a major impact of this study was that it proved to school administrators that the students in their own school had insufficient diets.

"Before," she says, "they believed these children to be in some school 500 miles away. When they saw the results of the study on paper, they became much more amenable to any action to improve and expand their food services."

Reaching needy children

Project ANSER also worked on methods to help schools reach children eligible for free and reduced-price meals and to serve them in a non-discriminatory manner. One successful method involved the use of one-minute television spots to inform children and parents about free and reduced-price meals.

The spot announcements also served as reminders to the community at large that the school lunch program is available to all children and that payment rates are set so that all parents can afford them.

The researchers also found that schools where most students pay in advance are best able to protect the identity of children receiving free and reduced-price lunches.

Results of the project

Project ANSER helped the five participating counties and other counties in Florida expand and improve their food services. And the results of the project provide useful guidelines for school lunch planners in other parts of the country as well.

The tests and models developed during the project are included in the report, "Project ANSER—Five County Food Management Improvement Project." Copies of the report have been distributed to all State school food service directors. For additional information on topics covered by Project ANSER, contact your State school food service director or your nearest FNS regional office. ☆

AND LUNCH PARTICIPATION SOARED!

MENUS GET SPECIAL TREATMENT AT BISMARCK

By Melanie Watts

WHEN MORE STUDENTS are studying in the cafeteria than eating, it's time to make some changes in the school food service. And that's just what officials at Bismarck High School in Bismarck, North Dakota, did last year. The result was an increase of nearly 370 percent in school lunch participation.

Fewer than 10 percent of the students were buying Type A lunches last January when Bismarck High School enrolled in the FNS High School Participation Project which is designed to boost teenagers' interest in school lunch. More than 300 high schools across the Nation are participating in the project, which began in 1972 with an in-depth study of 20 schools—10 with high participation and 10 with low participation. The results of that study suggest guidelines school administrators and school food service personnel can use in their efforts to increase participation.

Although a number of factors contributed to Bismarck's sagging lunch program, most of the problems were solved when Kate Reff, BHS cafeteria manager, and her staff initiated some innovative changes in the food service operation.

One of the first changes was an expanded menu. Now five Type A meal selections are available daily, compared to one last year. Recent fare included fried chicken, hamburgers and taco entrees, and a diet plate and sack lunch. The last two new additions proved so popular with students and faculty that they are offered every day.

"The coaches are going to encourage their athletes to buy the diet

plate," reports Harvey Schilling, Bismarck school food service manager. "In the past, those guys would just go without lunch in order to lose weight."

Ms. Reff and Mr. Schilling agree the expanded menu is the main reason the school's average daily participation in the National School Lunch Program has soared from 190 to 700.

"It's a lot more work," says Ms. Reff, "but we are happier, and the kids are happier."

The next change involved food appearance. Last year, a la carte items were dressed up beautifully, while Type A lunches did not receive any special treatment.

"If I were a student," a USDA consultant told Ms. Reff last January, "I'd choose the a la carte selections because the food just looks better." And of the 800 students eating in the cafeteria, about 600 were doing just that.

Now Ms. Reff and her staff serve food that looks as good as it has always tasted. But appearances are deceiving, and most students are firmly convinced that the meals are totally different.

"What have you done to the food this year?" a student asked Ms. Reff one day. "The meals are so much better."

Some foods are different this year as a result of suggestions made by students. Mr. Schilling periodically talks to students at lunch, soliciting their comments and criticism. Last year he learned that students considered the meat patties used on hamburgers dry and tasteless, but they rated the french fries "best in town." They preferred fish burgers to complete turkey dinners and wanted grilled cheese sandwiches more often. Ms. Reff included all these suggestions, and more, in the new school lunch menu.

"I don't like plate waste," she says, "and that's what you have if the kids don't like the food."

Type A lunches now appear on both serving lines, also a change from

last year's practice of serving Type A lunches from one line and a la carte items from the other. Now most students who choose the a la carte line select Type A combinations instead of individual items or sandwiches, which are still available.

Special dessert incentives, available only on the a la carte line last year, are now offered just to Type A customers. And new entrees, such as tacos, are showing up on the Type A lunches. Ms. Reff posts a daily menu which heightens the students' interest in the school lunch program.

Finding room to accommodate all the new lunch customers has remained a problem at Bismarck High School. The staff has added more tables and chairs this year, but still the cafeteria can seat only about 300 students. About 1,500 students are on the BHS campus during lunch.

And since the cafeteria doubles as a study hall and student lounge, students trying to eat lunch there must compete for space with those studying or relaxing between classes.

Principal Emory Swanson says this problem will be solved next fall when another high school is ready for occupancy. Until then, though, students with just 30 minutes for lunch are often discouraged by the long serving lines and the crowded cafeteria.

Many of these discouraged students still take advantage of the BHS "open campus" policy and head for one of several nearby fast food places.

"If we had another serving line," suggested Dave Blackstead, school business official, "we'd probably attract more students."

As soon as more students started buying lunches, participation in the school's breakfast program also increased.

"Just like that, everything jumped up," explains a pleasantly surprised Ms. Reff. "We couldn't be happier."

Happy she is, but satisfied she's not. About 800 to 900 students eat in the cafeteria each day and before the year is over Ms. Reff vows she'll have them all converted to Type A customers. ☆

PROJECT SMILE SELLS LUNCH AT CARROLLTON

By Christina McGovern

IN ONE CAFETERIA, noise, unruliness and gross littering were the order of the day. Many students spent their lunchbreak in horseplay and loud talking, leaving food, paper and silverware on the tables and the floor. It was hard for the next shift of students to find a place to put down their trays.

Today's lunch bell rings in another cafeteria. Students pour in, fall into orderly lines, talking and laughing. They take their trays to cloth-covered tables with four or five other students, to enjoy quiet discussions and a good meal. Piano music plays softly on the stereo. And the cafeteria is as clean for the last shift of students as for the first.

Two different schools? No, it's the same school—Carrollton High School, in Carrollton, Georgia—before and after Project SMILE, "Suggested Methods for Improving Lunchroom Experiences."

Project SMILE is not just a name—it has brought smiles to faces of everyone concerned: students, cafeteria workers, the principal, teachers, and the county superintendent.

One Carrollton student noted enthusiastically that what had once seemed an "old, disgusting place to come and waste 30 minutes" is now a great place to eat and have fun.

Dr. H. M. Fulbright, Carrollton City school superintendent, began the project with a firm belief that cleanliness and good behavior are inspired by pleasant surroundings. He viewed it as an opportunity not only to boost lunch participation, but to teach students nutrition and good eating habits.

Dr. Fulbright discussed his ideas with school principal Harold Hallman, school counselor Earlene Bryson, and lunchroom manager Elizabeth Shoemaker, and the project began to take shape.

Project SMILE was funded in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Education, to develop innovative approaches to traditional school lunchroom problems. Carrollton High





School received a grant of \$14,000 to help pay for costs involved in implementing the project.

The atmosphere in the cafeteria was a prime area of concern. So the school ordered new curtains, new dishes, glasses and colorful chairs, and replaced the long, institutional lunchroom tables with smaller ones.

The plastic-lined garbage cans and dishwashing area are now separated from the cafeteria by a partition designed by the art department and built by the maintenance department and shop classes. Students deposit trash and trays behind colorful plexi-glass and wood planters filled with flowers.

To find out students' food preferences, project director Nita Barr gave them a lunchroom questionnaire. Their responses included such suggestions as "serve hot foods hot, cold foods cold," and "use less shortening in pies, less grease in french fries."

The school's 150 seniors were the focal point of the project. They received special social privileges on a month-by-month schedule. Now seniors lunch in a special carpeted area, divided from the rest of the cafeteria by planter-partitions. Each table is covered with a clean, white cloth

Student servers in colorful smocks set the weekly smorgasbord-style lunch. Seniors eat in a special carpeted dining area with tables with white cloths.



made by the home economics department, and each has a seasonal flower arrangement in the center.

Once a week the seniors eat smorgasbord-style. As they pass through the line, student servers in colorful smocks hand out silverware and plates, along with festive napkins. Seniors serve themselves such foods as turkey and dressing, sweet potatoes in orange cups, and cranberry salad.

To compensate for the special treatment to seniors, underclassmen can choose from four menus daily, including chef salad. "Everyone prefers choosing among four lunches each day," says one teacher. And principal Harold Hallman attributes the increased participation primarily to the variety of entrees.

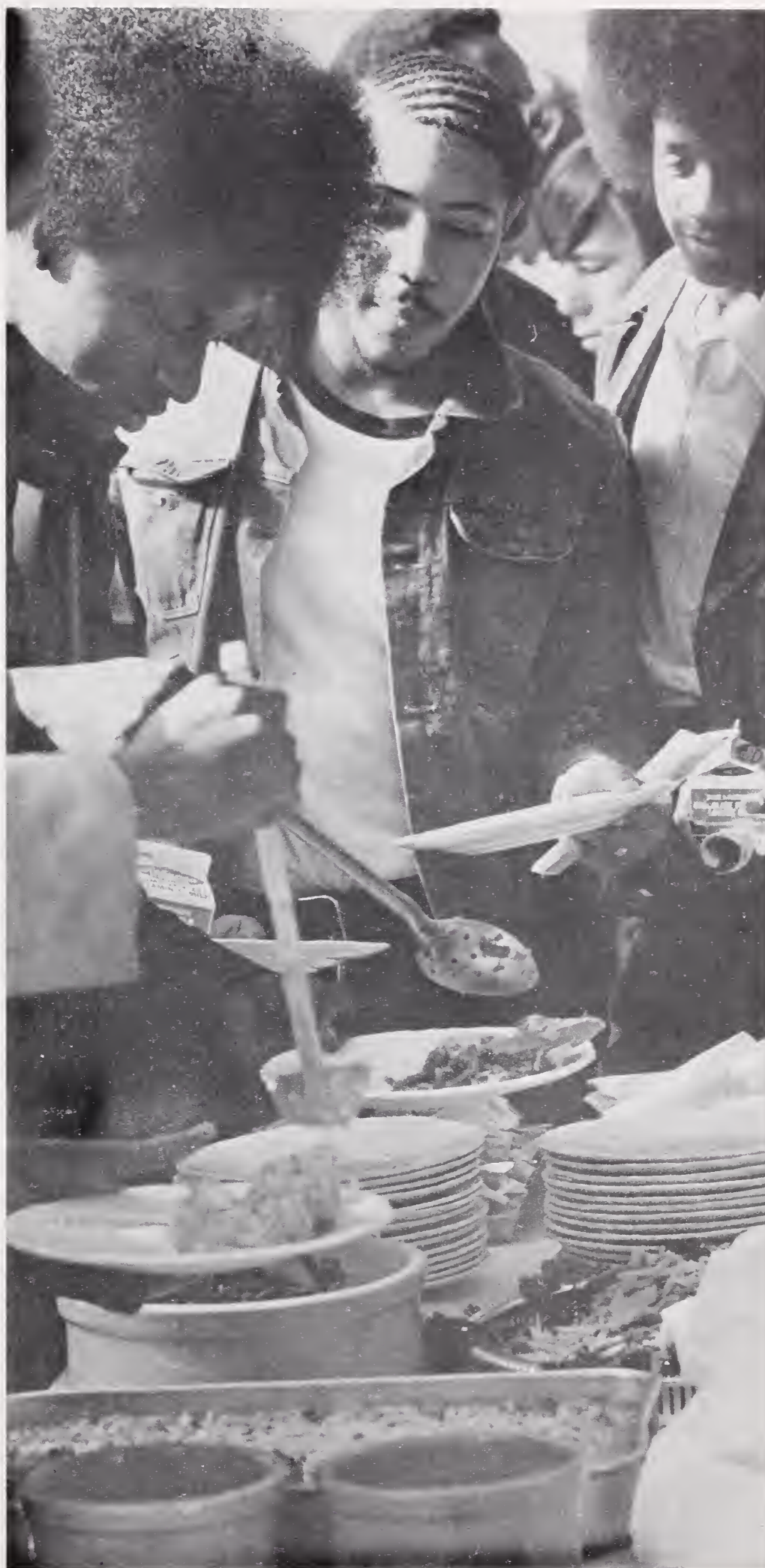
Although the new choices sent participation figures soaring, litter and misconduct were still problems. The high school newspaper, "Black and Gold," cooperated by printing editorials to discourage littering and encourage pride in the cafeteria. Slogans like "Be Bitter About Litter" appeared around the school, and students formed crews to clean tables between lunch shifts.

Principal Hallman and Dr. Fulbright have more plans for the cafeteria. Eventually, they hope to install acoustical tile to help further deaden noise. Ms. Barr, who now teaches at Carrollton, has home economics classes developing gourmet menus for future lunches. Seniors have already enjoyed such treats as ambrosia, a dessert of mixed fruits.

Plans include involving more classes in "Special Day" lunches. Last May, a special "Li'l Abner" day menu featured country cooking, including black-eyed peas, cornbread and blackberry cobbler.

Participation in the school lunch program at Carrollton High School has not fallen below 81 percent since the project began. But it is not the participation figures that make those involved in the project smile; it's the relaxed, warm atmosphere of the cafeteria, and the pride students take in the lunch program. ☆

Reports on Project SMILE have been distributed to State school lunch directors.



Seniors serve themselves turkey and dressing smorgasbord-style.

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